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342 travellers in the area all comment on the excellently built huts and the cleanness of the villages.[1] Lord Lugard calls their huts 'the neatest and the most wonderfully built of any I have seen in Africa, excepting only the houses of the king and chiefs in Uganda.'[2] This high standard of building necessitates hard work and co-operation between a number of men and women.

c. Cultivation

241 The primary unit in cultivation is the elementary family consisting of a man, his wife and unmarried children or, in the case of a polygynous family, of the house group of a wife and her children, together with her husband, part of whose time is spent in hoeing her fields.[3] There is also, however, some co-operation with other relatives, and with village neighbours.

241 476 Unmarried sons hoe with their fathers and very often they bring one or more village-mates to work with them, making return, in due course, by working with these friends for their respective fathers. The boys who come are fed after hoeing, and should be fed generously, by the woman in whose fields they have worked. After his betrothal a young man comes in the same way with village-mates to hoe for his father-in-law, as well as continuing to hoe for his own father. Once his wife joins him they have their own fields, and the bulk of his time is spent in hoeing for her, but he still hoes one or two strips (*embaka*) for his own father and for his father-in-law. Such help is reciprocal, for his 'mothers' (i.e. his own mother and his father's other wives) and sisters, as well as the 'mothers' and sisters of his wife, will help his wife with her tasks of sowing, weeding, and reaping. From the point of view of village organization the essential fact is that young men working for fathers and fathers-in-law very frequently bring one or two village-mates with them. A typical hoeing group is made up of a man with his sons, and one or two village-mates of the sons.

[584]

Larger hoeing parties, to which not only youths, but also older men come, are fairly common, especially among the Kukwe.

[1] Elton, op. cit., p. 323; D. Kerr-Cross, 'Crater-lakes north of Lake Nyasa' in *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. V (1895), p. 116–7.

[2] F. D. Lugard, *The Rise of our East African Empire* (1893), Vol. I, p. 52.

[3] The respective rights of the husband and of each wife have been analysed by Godfrey Wilson, op. cit., pp. 16–29.

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(*ukumoga*) is not confined to the company of contemporaries of the same sex. Indeed the liveliest dancing is before members of the opposite sex, and is often the preliminary to love-making; but full opportunity for display is thought to depend upon living in a village, rather than in scattered homesteads. Some Nyakyusa are colonists, cultivating and building out in unoccupied bush country five or six miles from a settled area; but living out in the bush is disliked by most people and is done, we were told, only for gain. Cattle are said to increase very much more quickly out in bush, where grazing is plentiful, than they do on the village pastures, and the yield of virgin fields made in the bush is high. Hence the Nyakyusa dictum: 'People live in the villages for display, in the bush for gain.' And individuals commonly display themselves as members of a group—a group of contemporaries of the same sex, that is, of village-mates.

d. Decency

The basis of Nyakyusa sexual morality is the separation of the sexual activities of successive generations, more particularly the separation of the sexual activities of mothers and sons, and the complete segregation of fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law.

Nyakyusa informants hold that boys are sent out of their parents' village to build apart so that their parents may have privacy. Mwaisumo explained: 'If a boy over ten years old stays at home to sleep, he is laughed at by his friends, and his own parents send him away. They say, "If he sleeps at home he will hear what his parents talk about at night"; the night is always full of lewd talk; and he may even see them undressing. He will grow up a fool, with little wisdom! You see at the boys' village', he went on to say, 'the older boys tell all sorts of stories, especially about women, they discuss love-making and women, and tell tales of their own conquests. The younger ones listen to these things and that's all right in the boys' village, that is how we learn, but we compare in our minds and think that if a boy stays at home it is as if he listened to all this from his parents, and people always do talk lewdly at night; and that is very bad, that is foolishness. But in the boys' village it is good for the young ones to listen, that is how children grow up.'

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582 Marriage with the daughter of a father's age-mate is also favoured, though she is called 'a village-sister' (*ulilumbu pa kipanga*), and such a marriage means that a girl has to avoid a father-in-law in her own father's village.

837 835 Adultery with the wife of a village neighbour is regarded as a heinous offence, much worse than ordinary adultery, and so also is the seduction of the wife of one's father, or of one of his village neighbours, even though a father's wives are eventually inherited by his son. 'It is bad,' Mwaisumo said, 'because they are friends of one's own mother.' That is to say, there is a direct extension of the incest taboo so long as the father is alive. A son who has committed adultery with his own father's wives is afraid to attend his father's funeral lest he fall dead.[1]

764 584 Since marriage between 'brothers and sisters of the village' is approved, courtship goes on between the youths of a boys' village and the girls of their fathers' village, with this limitation, that brothers and sisters, or cousins—the descendants of a common grandfather or great-grandfather—must not be present at a flirtation. Boys from the same age-village go about together, and they commonly flirt with any group of girls they meet, whether from their fathers' village or not. It is then that the incest taboos are learnt. If one of the boys is known to be related to one of the girls his companions send him away saying: 'Don't you see your sister is here? You cannot come.'

Formerly, we were told, girls of the same village lived together (until they were married) in a girls' house (*isaka*), where they were visited secretly by lovers, who had external relations with them. Such girls' houses no longer exist among the Nyakyusa, each daughter living in her father's homestead until she is married, and sleeping with her own mother, or with a stepmother when her father visits her mother, or with the other children in a separate division of the long house, if her mother is the only wife. Only when she is keeping an older companion company at the initiation ritual does she sleep with the other girls of the village in a hut provided by the 'bride's' father.[2] But permanent girls' houses still exist in Ngonde. There each family

[1] Occasionally an elderly man gives his son leave to sleep with his wives in secret, while he (the father) is still alive; then an elaborate ritual is performed on the father's death.

[2] This hut is referred to as *isaka* also, but only during the initiation; it is to be distinguished from a hut regularly reserved for girls.

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usually has a separate hut for its girls, to which, we were told, their lovers come secretly by night.

Nyakyusa informants connected the existence of girls' houses with the marriage age. In Ngonde the marriage age of girls is much higher than it is among the Nyakyusa, partly because there are many more Christians (45 per cent as against 16 per cent) who do not allow polygyny, partly because even the girls from pagan families in Ngonde dislike marrying a polygynist, and partly because a much higher percentage of young men are away at work, than from Nyakyusa country. Formerly, they said, the marriage age was higher among the Nyakyusa also, and then the Nyakyusa had *isaka*. It is certain that among the Nyakyusa betrothal of a girl has long taken place before puberty, for the husband plays an essential part in the puberty ritual, and there were always some girls who were betrothed when quite tiny; but the evidence is fairly clear that the average age of betrothal among the pagans has been going down. The Nyakyusa view is that no man in his senses, who is able to marry, will engage a little girl of eight if he can find one approaching puberty; and it is the scarcity of wives that makes men 'marry' little girls. It is also clear that the number of cattle in the country, and their rate of circulation, has increased during the last two decades, so there are 'too many cattle chasing too few brides' with the result that the marriage age of girls has fallen, and the number of cattle given at marriage has increased.

Once she is betrothed, a girl's 'husband' has exclusive sexual rights over her, and she cannot entertain lovers in the *isaka*. The only two occasions on which she may flirt and have external relations with a man other than her husband, are during an initiation ceremony, when the girls of the village who have not yet reached puberty sleep with their fellow who is being initiated, and there entertain young men, and when she accompanies a bride to her husband's house. A bridegroom is expected to have external relations with his wife's two friends, as well as with his wife, on the night they bring her to his house. Love-making at the initiation-marriage ritual is held to be 'part of the ritual' and a means of sex education, and a husband can make no complaint about his 'wife' receiving lovers then, provided that penetration does not take place.

Homosexual practices are said to be very common in the boys'

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woman. It is scarcely surprising that the seduction of the young wives of an ageing father is a common theme for scandal. We do not suggest that the Oedipus complex involving own mother and son never occurs among the Nyakyusa; what we are concerned to show is that the relationship between a man and his stepmothers is particularly likely to be ambivalent.

It may be asked why there is so much emphasis on the segregation of sons from their parents, and not of daughters. The answer again lies in the sex difference in the marriage age. Betrothed girls pay long visits to their husbands even before puberty, and directly after the initiation which follows first menstruation they leave their fathers' home to join their husbands. During her initiation a girl carefully avoids her father and his contemporaries in the village, and after marriage, when she returns home to visit, she must observe certain restrictions not applicable to an unmarried girl: notably she must not approach her parents' bed, and informants interpret the taboo as being due to the danger of mixing the sex activities of mother and daughter.

In short, we argue that there is a connection between the existence of age-villages and the fear of incest between father-in-law and daughter-in-law on the one hand, and between stepson and stepmother on the other, and we suggest that certain features of the Nyakyusa social system facilitate incest of the second type. The incest theme elaborated in one fashion among people organized in clans and practising clan exogamy, and in another among people practising brother—sister avoidance, finds yet a different expression in age-villages, of which the overt purpose is the separation of ons and mothers, of fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law.

e. Good company

The emphasis on the separation of parents and children is matched by the value laid on good fellowship (*ukwangala*) between contemporaries. A main end of age-villages, in the Nyakyusa view, is to allow men the enjoyment of congenial company, that is the company of friends and equals. The value of *ukwangala* is, indeed, directly linked with the age-village organization: to attain it men must build not only in villages, rather than in scattered homesteads, but also with contemporaries rather than with kin, since there can be no free and easy inter-

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CHAPTER IV

THE RITUAL OF PUBERTY AND MARRIAGE

I. IN SELYA AND MUNGONDE

(*a*) *The events*

881 585 584 836 THE puberty ritual for girls among the Nyakyusa is fused with the marriage ritual. Girls are usually betrothed well before puberty and they may live with their 'husbands' for some time before they grow up, for the view of most Nyakyusa is that a girl should become accustomed to her husband gradually and that it is good for her to visit him from time to time, sweeping his house, cleaning the byre, drawing water and cooking for him, and learning the art of love-making with him and no one else. While she is still very immature it is insisted that he should only have intercourse with her *inter crura*, but when she is approaching puberty he often has full intercourse with her. No legal case can be brought against him in court if he does so, provided that he has not forced or frightened her, but his friends may tell him he is foolish, and is 'teaching his wife adultery', since now he can have no proof, in the physical examination at puberty, that she has not slept with other men. No stigma attaches to the girl; if it is her husband who has deflowered her she is acclaimed in the ritual as a virgin. In some pagan families, however, notably those of chiefs, girls are not allowed to visit their husbands before puberty. The girl's father has the right to [171] refuse it, for before the ritual a wife is only 'borrowed'. Unlike the neighbouring Bemba, the Nyakyusa are not anxious lest the girl should conceive before her first menstruation—if she should do so the ritual is performed in the ordinary way—but many fathers dislike letting their daughters go before the main bulk of the marriage cattle have been handed over. Opposition on the part of the missions and the Administration to early marriage also influences the more sophisticated. The period of betrothal is long, for pagan [145] girls are commonly engaged from about 8 years old onwards, and the average age of puberty appears to be between 15 and 16.[1]

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783 881 If a bride is her husband's first or second wife[1] (but not if she is a junior wife) she washes with him ritually at his homestead. The officiant (*unyago*), who may be her husband's own mother or some other mature woman chosen by her, pours out medicated water, and groom and bride wash together, his hands being above and hers below. This usually takes place about a month after her seclusion, but neither it nor the following events are timed to coincide with periods.

881 584 [431] In one ritual we watched, that of the daughter of Chief Mwaihojo, the go-between in the marriage and the brother of the groom came to fetch the bride for the ritual washing (*ukusukusula*), bringing her a small gift of 10 cents, four weeks after her first menstruation. She washed in medicated water with her husband at his house and returned to her father's the same night (May 19). Next day, about 3 p.m., the groom's 'mothers' (*abakamwana*), twelve of them, and one girl, arrived carrying six stems of bananas and four enormous pots of curds for the ritual of *ukwingesia*, 'putting her in'. They approached, singing two of the ritual songs:

Litubuke, litubuke,
Tubuke mwailugula.
Let us go, let us go,
Let us go for ever and never return.

and

Akasyunguti kambagila
Paliti po pabuko bwangu.
The *syunguti* tree suited me,
The place is like that of my own in-laws.

The bride was carried first by one and then by another of her 'mothers' (*abanna*)[2] while a compact group of mothers and maids, with the bride raised high in their midst, danced to and fro. And all the time she held a mat to shield her head and face. After five minutes or so the dancing stopped and the 'mother-in-law' sat down in the shade, as Kyobwe (a senior wife of Mwaihojo who acted in place of the bride's own mother who was divorced) came to greet them formally and receive their gifts of food. Meanwhile the bride herself knelt on the ground beside Kyobwe's hut, her head covered with a mat, and surrounded by her maids. Presently

[1] Informants differed on this point. Some maintained that chiefs alone washed with two wives, commoners with one only. Others insisted that commoners also washed with two.

[2] i.e. her father's wives, and wives of his brothers and neighbours.

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the groom's mothers began to dance again. They approached the group of girls and the groom's own mother took the mat off the kneeling bride and spread a large scarlet cloth over her. Then she lifted her on to her shoulders and danced with her. The two parties coalesced and danced together, singing the ritual song *Tukulelela akela* (We sing a dirge). Everyone was smiling and joyful despite the song. By 3.40 the dancing was over and a large mat was spread for the 'mothers-in-law' to sit down in the shade. The bride knelt again with bent head covered by her mat and surrounded by her maids.

At this point Mwaihojo, her father, began scolding angrily because the groom's party had not brought a bull. 'Always when people come to marry my daughters they bring a bull, always. It looks as if the girl had been to visit her husband and you had found fault with her and did not like her.' The groom's mothers replied: 'We are poor.'

Mwaihojo: 'How can you say you are poor? You can find the marriage-cattle, you say. Why didn't you bring some of them? Then I would have killed one to eat now. See, I have killed a bull already. If I had known that you were not going to bring one I'd have killed another.'

The groom's mothers sat with downcast heads. For a commoner's daughter bananas and milk are adequate for the *ukwingesia* feast, but a chief has the right to expect a bull.

Presently the groom's own mother and one of her companions entered Kyobwe's hut to roast bananas and grind some of the bark of a tree they had brought for medicine. The powder was put into a small calabash with water. The bride knelt in the doorway of Kyobwe's hut and, as her mother-in-law poured out the medicated water, she washed her hands and wrists and mouth in it. The bride's half-brother, a lad of 15 or 16 years, was washed also, standing by the doorway of Kyobwe's hut, though he was most reluctant to co-operate. He kept looking towards his elder brother Lazarus, a Christian, and did not submit until Lazarus said: 'All right, go ahead!' Kyobwe, seeing his reluctance, said: 'You need not wash if you don't wish to, it doesn't matter. Perhaps we'll leave it out as it's European times now.' Then finally she said: 'Well, just hold out one hand,' and she washed it. Had the bride been the eldest daughter of either of her father's two senior wives he would have washed in place of her brother, and had her own mother not been divorced she would have washed also.

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881 One of the women of the groom's party then fetched two banana
●584 leaves, one of sweet banana and one of plantain, and put them down in Kyobwe's hut. Meantime the mother of the groom changed the bride's belt and the bark-cloth worn between the legs, dressing her in new ones, and burying the old cloth, soiled by first menstruation, in a bundle of dry banana leaves. These she placed on top of the fresh leaves already mentioned, covered the pile with a small rough mat, and sprinkled it with powdered medicine. The bride knelt on the mat and, with head bent, ate roast bananas also sprinkled with the powdered medicine, which her mother-in-law handed to her. Her young brother who had washed with her also shared the bananas. After this the bride is free to wash, but not yet to oil herself.

The groom's mothers were feasted on meat and bananas—two large and two small basketfuls—and returned home. The atmosphere all through the ritual was one of rejoicing, and it was markedly a women's affair. The chief and several other men were present but, apart from his scolding of the women for not bringing a bull, the chief played no part at all.

[431] According to strict custom the groom's mothers should have come a second time with gifts of food (*ukusumbulela*)[1] to cement the friendship, but since the groom was in a hurry to get to work on the Lupa gold-fields this act was omitted. 'They brought the two lots of food together,' we were told, 'some of the milk and bananas were for the *ukwingesia* and some for the *ukusumbulela*.'

583 Three weeks later (June 14) the groom, with his go-between and
535 other friends, brought the main body of marriage-cattle (*ukukwa*), and they danced the stamping dance (*ukukanya nganya*) in the bride's father's courtyard and on the litter of the seclusion hut, brandishing their spears as they stamped to the war rhythm. The bride's companions and mothers danced in a separate group, one mother carrying the bride on her shoulders. A lavish feast of cooked food was set before the groom and his friends, and they in their turn scattered pieces of meat and cents which the bride's
[578] maids and 'mothers' scrambled for. Meantime a quarrel broke out between the bride's father and her brothers over the distribution of the marriage-cattle.

881 Six weeks after the *ukwingesia* (July 29) the bride, accompanied
584 by two of her father's wives, two of her maids, and a third girl invited because she was a good singer, went to wash ritually again

[1] *Ukusumbulela*: to give a present for the first time to a new friend.

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at the groom's home (*ukusukusula*). The party was given a hen when they arrived and a second the next morning. The groom and some of his friends spent the night with the bride and her friends. (He and she lie together on this occasion but do not yet have full intercourse.)[1] In the morning the mother-in-law shaved the bride's head, eyebrows, and eyelashes, leaving only a small tuft on the nape of her neck. Then she mixed water with powdered medicine and poured it for groom and bride to wash. The groom washed his hands and mouth only, the bride her hands and mouth and whole body. During her seclusion she might not use oil or the red powder favoured as a cosmetic by Nyakyusa women,[2] but after this third washing she was free to do so, and she oiled herself meticulously. Meantime the groom was shaved by one of his friends.

On the same day the bride returned to her father's homestead with her own party and seven 'mothers' of the groom who brought five stems of bananas, a pot of water, and a small bull for the ritual of 'clearing out the litter' (*ukusosya ulufumbo*). She herself was wearing the skin of a bull over her head—'she wears any skin she can get hold of'. One of the groom's party shaved off the last tuft of her hair and buried it carefully in the *ulufumbo*, the litter of banana leaves on which she had slept and sat during her seclusion. Had her own mother been present she would have shaved also and so should the brother, but he did not do so. The groom's mother and Kyobwe (representing the bride's mother) carried out the litter to the edge of the banana plantation surrounding the homestead. As they did so they whispered to each other. Kyobwe said the bride was a little liar. Her husband had offered her 1s. to take to her mothers and she had refused it saying: 'No, they swear at me and grudge me food.' 'She's your child,' said the mother-in-law. 'No,' said Kyobwe, 'she's another woman's child, she's a foolish child.' Every scrap of litter in the hut was carefully collected and a little of the soil below it scraped off and carried out with the leaves. All who had helped with the clearing washed their hands carefully.

Then the groom's mother made a basin of two banana leaves close to the pile of litter. Into it she poured the water her party had brought with them, and sprinkled in powdered medicine in

[1] One or two informants maintained that 'she must not refuse him now or he will refuse to wash with her, saying: "She is not my wife."' But others were insistent that according to strict custom only intercourse *inter crura* was allowed. Full intercourse at this time would make nonsense of the *ilibalaga* ritual which follows.

[2] Formerly also by men: cf. V. Giraud, *Les Lacs de l'Afrique Equatoriale* (1890), p. 176.

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881 the form of a cross. The bride knelt down and carefully washed
584 her whole body. When she had done so the groom's mother told one of her party to light the pile of litter. As it blazed up, the bride leapt across it. Three of her maids and a married half-sister had plucked banana suckers, of the sort used for propagating bananas, and they struck her with them as she leapt back and forth over the fire. She was nervous, though the jump was easy, and her maids jeered at her. Then she returned to Kyobwe's hut and dried herself in the sun. Now that the litter was burnt she had come out of her seclusion and was free to sleep on ordinary mats; from the entering of seclusion to the coming out, she could only sleep on the litter, except for the night preceding the burning which she spent with her husband.

584 The mothers of the groom were feasted on sweet potatoes and
585 curds provided by the bride's family, and there was a discussion as to whether the bull the groom's party had brought was 'milk to eat with the bananas' for the bride's family, or 'the bull of virginity'. The bride's father insisted that it was only a relish for the feast and he did not prepare the beer for the final act of the ritual. Two weeks later the bride eloped with her husband because he had not got another bull to bring her father, and the final rites were never performed for her.

584 On the night before the ritual of 'clearing the litter' the bride's father should put millet to soak for beer, and when it is ready the groom's mothers come for the *ilitemelo* and *ulufundo*, that is, to 'shave the sprouting hair' and instruct the bride; but for the daughter of Mwasofu, for whom we watched it performed, it was long delayed. She had reached puberty seven months previously and before that had lived for three months with the man who had first betrothed her, but he had been unable to find sufficient cattle for the marriage, and the ritual was completed with another man.

585 The groom's 'mothers' arrived about one-thirty, by which time everyone was getting impatient. The men had nearly finished their beer and grumbled that the groom's party was late, and the bride herself was begging her mother to be allowed to go and bathe. Her mother replied emphatically: 'No, no, how can you go? The mothers-in-law will wash you and dress you in brass body-rings. That's the ritual.' Six women came in the groom's party—his own mother, his sister, two 'village mothers', and two young married women of the groom's village. A large mat was spread for

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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vessel of milk and two stems of bananas. We do not carry her in triumph. The mothers-in-law do not bring the powdered medicine.' One informant maintained that the bride was always examined before she washed with her husband (if she was a chief wife) and we once saw the bride examined at the *ukwingesia* ritual, but the examination before handing over the bull is the only one mentioned by most people. What is certain is that virginity must be publicly demonstrated in the ritual and that it is honoured.

After the shaving and instruction, the bride goes round her father's village visiting the men who have not already given her a gift. She is accompanied by the wife of the go-between who represented her father in the marriage negotiations. Each of her father's fellow villagers (as well as her elder brothers and her father's full sisters) should give her something—a bark-cloth, a chicken, a calabash, a spearhead, or some coins, as he greets her. These the bride divides between her maids, the officiant who treated her in the ritual, her husband, and herself; to the wife of the go-between is due one pot of the beer brewed for the shaving ritual, to take home to her husband.

If the agreed number of marriage-cattle have been handed over, the bride's father puts millet to soak for beer immediately after the rite of instruction has been completed and the bull of puberty eaten. When the brewing is ready the bride is formally taken to her husband's house (*ukumbeka*) by a 'mother' and one or two of her maids. Her own mother never goes—the woman of the party is usually a junior wife of the bride's father or the wife of the go-between. They take with them one or two pots of beer, a basketful of plantains to roast for her husband, two or three cooking pots, a log of firewood, a calabash of light ointment (*isyemba*), and a little pot of brown ointment (*imbale*) for anointing her husband and his friends in the village. 'What the wife brings when she comes for the first time is for all the men of the village to use to anoint themselves. They come every day to use it until it is finished.' These ointments are brought by every wife but they are especially important if the bride is her husband's first wife, and it is his bachelor neighbours who mostly use them. The bride also brings the fine mat and several coarse ones which she has woven during her seclusion, bark-cloths she has made for herself, and three hearth bricks (*amafyo*) carefully moulded for her by her mother out of clay and manure mixed with medicines. These are set up in her

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danger of incest. They account for the rule by a myth which tells how a certain chief looked on his son's wife and saw that she was beautiful and took her, and men were shocked, and forbade a father-in-law and daughter-in-law ever to see one another again. And this taboo, they say, is the reason why fathers and sons must live in separate villages. To avoid (*ukutila*) is 'to fear, to show respect'. Avoidance occurs between women in a limited degree—a girl shows respect to her father's sister, a daughter-in-law to her mother-in-law and her husband's father's sister by not looking at them directly or touching their backs; but these women are in some measure identified with father and father-in-law, and the taboos are most stringent regarding things or actions which are associated with sexual activity. The behaviour of Nyakyusa women suggests very strongly that the fundamental idea in *ukutila* is avoidance of incest.[1] Avoidance between father-in-law and daughter-in-law is the primary rule of good manners and morals in domestic relations, and is constantly expressed in everyday activities.

Besides being a celebration of the change from childhood to womanhood, and of movement from the lineage of her father to that of her husband, the puberty—marriage ritual includes a legal contract. Either at the betrothal, or when the bulk of the marriage-cattle are handed over, the groom's go-between thrusts a spear into the earth of the swept courtyard and there, publicly, before her kinsfolk and neighbours, the bride must pluck it out and hand it to her father, in token of her consent to the marriage. 'It means: "With this spear you may slay me if I run away from my husband." And her father keeps the spear and may kill her if she does—some fathers did so in the old days.'

After taking the spear the father plucks a banana leaf and hands his daughter the mid-rib with which she strikes one of the cows brought by her husband, and all the women of the homestead acclaim her. Thus her acceptance of the marriage is demonstrated. And each time an instalment of the marriage-cattle is handed over, the go-between of her father and the go-between of the husband must both be present as witnesses; and they notify their sons of the contracts they have so witnessed so that the sons may give evidence after the death of their fathers if necessary.

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 83–6, 106, 123, 160–2; 'Nyakyusa Kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, edited by A. R. Radcliffe-Brown and Daryll Forde, p. 127–8.

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byre or strike a beast with a stick 'until the twins had grown up' 845
(an elastic phrase), 'but if he has no sons to milk a doctor comes
and gives him a medicine to drink in the house, then he can milk
the cows outside. To enter the byre is altogether taboo.' He and
his attendant during his seclusion drink the milk of one cow only,
which has been specially treated. All his wives avoid milk until the
end of the ritual and the mother of twins herself 'can only begin
to clean the byre after she has borne at least one other child'—
some say two or three other children. If a cow is given her for milk
(after the end of the ritual) it is taboo for others to share that milk.
If these taboos are broken it is said that the cattle will purge and
die, or their legs will swell.

It is also taboo for a parent of twins to pass behind people—he
(or she) must always pass in front. 'They fear that if he passes be-
hind, he (the parent) will always have twins.'

Twins, and their parents who have been through the full ritual,
are thereafter immune from the danger of twin birth and may
even go in to greet a mother of twins—Mwakobela's sister, who
herself had borne twins, entered his wife's seclusion hut. There are,
however, two or three taboos which apply to twins in later life. It
is taboo for one of a pair of twin girls to get married without the 584 ●
other. Angombwike explained:

If a man comes wooing the first he must do it secretly, and when he [761]
speaks to her father he must do it secretly, he may bring cows but no
one knows about it; if it becomes known they say the younger might
curse herself (*akwibusa*) and die. Then when another has come wooing
the other, secretly, the father tells them both to come wooing openly *on
the same day*. They come with cows. Then the father summons all his
children, and the twin girls, and tells them: 'These men have come to
marry you, do you like them?' And he asks the elder (*mbusa*): 'Which
do you like?' She chooses. Even if she chooses the man who came for her
sister he must accept, and if he tries to protest people will hush him up
at once, for it is the custom for the elder to get married first. Then the
younger (*mwinshila*) says she likes the other one and their father takes
the cattle. If either one is wooed secretly before the other she must stay
quietly at home till a wooer comes for her sister. If she did not (which-
ever way it happened) the other might die. It is common knowledge in
the boys' village here that of X's twin daughters a lover has only come
for the younger, none for the elder. And so both are still unmarried.

Twins and their parents, the fearful ones (*abipaya*), and other 264
people who have been treated with medicines, eat first-fruits of 789
■

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765 they seek two or three officiants, and they build a temporary hut behind the living huts where they strain three pots of beer, which they call 'the beer of the shades'. These officiants do not bathe their bodies because they say: 'Let us be with the shade when we make the beer (*tujeje nagwe ngenda ku nkolomba abasimi*).' The rest of the beer is strained in the house.

When they have brewed it they take one potful from the temporary hut and pour the contents on top of the grave; then they dig a hole on the grave and place in it a little pot of beer. What is left in these two pots they drink, together with the rest of the beer, and there is much drumming.

766 After a long time has passed, perhaps two years, if there has been sickness in the home, they think that the deceased is making them giddy, is causing them to be ill. So they dig up the corpse and take all the bones and finger and toe nails. If one is left the sickness is not cured. When Mulape, the grandchild of Mwakafunga, was ill they dug up the corpse and the illness ceased very quickly. They pile up the bones which have been dug up.

III. MARRIAGE NEGOTIATIONS AND GIFTS

584 ANSWERER: One of our comrades in Kabembe heard that there was an unmarried girl at the Chief Mwasumbwe's, so one Monday he said to three of us: 'Don't go away, friends, we are going to woo the chief's daughter at Mwasumbwe's.' So we put on our best clothes, those we wear to church, and we went to the home of the father of the girl. He was the younger brother of the Chief Mwasumbwe by the same mother, and he told us: 'I am not the father (*ngwise*). She is my own child, but the father is the chief. Go to him' [i.e. authority over his daughter rested with his elder brother]. The girl had reached puberty. Someone else had married her, but her father had received only one cow, so the elder brother, the chief, was angry and took away the girl from her husband. My friend had never met her, never. He had just heard that there was an unmarried girl at that place, because the custom of making love to girls in the long grass is not a traditional one: a girl used to stay at her father's house. A young man went to the father before he spoke with the girl; he never spoke to her in secret. Then the father would send the girl to speak with the young man. She came and sat down and the young man looked at her closely and his friends who accompanied him helped him. Formerly a young man did not wear many clothes, he only wore one cloth in front, and a brass body-ring, so that his whole belly might be seen, and she might look closely. Also he sits high on a stool, while his fellows sit on the ground, that he may be seen by the girl.

[177 291] [516]

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be seen by the girl. Then the girl asks his fellows: 'What is he like, 584
friends?' And they reply: 'He's a real man.' Then she agrees to the 'go-between', saying: 'Indeed, I love them [*sic*].' But if she does not like them she refuses, and the young men go away. Yes, indeed, the girl always had power to refuse; no one ever compelled her to agree, even though the man had many cattle. The fathers always agreed for their part, saying: 'My daughter is good, she refuses at my house, and tells me (i.e. she does not accept and then run away, which is bad).' And if the girl has refused the young men go away, but others laugh and jeer at them, saying: 'So-and-so's daughter refused.'

'Oh?'

'Yes. Indeed, they are horrible young men, their bodies are very ugly.'

And the young men also look closely at the girl, they look very closely, and if they see that her breasts are thin, and her face is ugly, then they go and tell her father's friend, saying: 'We are leaving her, tell her father that we will not marry his daughter. Then he tells her father, who just says: 'All right, let them leave her.' But the custom of wooing in secret first, before a man has been to the father, began among Christians. The Christians say: 'It is good to woo in secret [177] first,' but pagan fathers still object, saying: 'We will not eat the cattle properly.'

So when the father of the girl had told us thus, we went to the chief's place, and sat down under a tree. The chief's wives sat down at a distance. Then we trembled and sweat came on our bodies. I said to my fellows: 'Do we just sit? Let us ask.' And I got up and asked the chief's wives: 'Is the chief at home?'

'Oh! Do you wish the chief?'

'Yes, we wish to see him.'

'But he is at another's wife's place. Shall we call him?'

'Please.'

'Where have you come from?'

'We come from Kabembe.'

Then I returned to my friends and the chief's wives called him, saying: 'Four young men from Kabembe have come and want to see you about something.'

Then the chief came with three of his men, and they greeted us. . . . Then the chief called to his wives: 'Bring some food for them to eat,' and he got up himself to cut a stem of bananas.

Then I said to my fellows: 'Friends, do we just chat to the chief without asking him? One should get up and tell the councillor that we had come to ask for a girl.'

Then they all said: 'You are brave, Angombwike, you get up.' 'No, I am ashamed to get up twice, let So-and-so get up.' He got up and told one of the chief's men: 'We have something to discuss; we

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584 have heard that there is a girl who is unmarried here, it is about this we wished to see the chief, there is nothing else. But we are poor, we know that we have not got cattle.'

'Oh! But here there is no girl. There is a nubile girl at the home of the younger brother of the chief, across the stream.'

'It is she we want, indeed.'

Then they told the chief this, and he came and sat among his men, and I went with my fellow who had told the councillor, and we sat down with them.

Then the chief said: 'You have come to seek a girl?'

We: 'Yes, indeed, Chief, it is for this that we wished to see you. There is not anything else. But we beg you, we know that we are very poor. We have not got cattle. That we know. But we will make ourselves your servants, and hoe for you.'

Then he said: 'Who are you?'

'Do you ask our names before we have agreed? I am a son of Syelage.'

'That Mwaisyelage who has built in Bulindanajo in the country of Mwaipopo?'

'Yes.'

'Indeed, you are like your father, and Linolemu[1] himself, you are like him, we were friends, they were always clever fellows. But who wants the girl?'

He asked all our names, then I pointed out the suitor and told him his name.

Then he said to his councillor: 'Tell them that M. (his younger brother) has many funerals in his family, his children die frequently. Perhaps it will create quarrels later on if the girl dies. We have lazy people in our lineage.' So he told us. Then I replied and said: 'We are all like that. . . . We have come to create kinship, we want funerals, to bury one another. If one has died, let his fellow come to mourn at his place.'

'Yes, but some of us exceed in dying.'

'That is what we want, funerals, and burying one another.'

'All right, I agree.' (To the councillor): 'Call the girl and let them speak with her.'

And he went to call her.

Then we put our fellow, the suitor, on a stool, and I and my friend and the councillor, the go-between of the father, went closer to the girl than the others to hear what she said. Then I spoke to the girl, saying: 'We sought you, we want something else of you, we love you. It is L. M. there who wishes to marry.' . . . We spoke with her. . . . Then she agreed and said: 'Indeed, I love them, he is my husband, I love him. I am startled looking at him, I am startled indeed.' Then the coun-

[1] Angumbwike's grandfather who was dead.

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cillor said: 'Give the girl a betrothal gift.' The groom gave her 3s., 584 ●
and I gave the councillor 1s. Then the councillor told the chief, saying: [465]
'The girl has agreed.' 'Thank you, tell them that they must bring four cows.'

Then they called us to eat. They put us in a house which they had prepared with many fine mats, and we sat down. They gave us four calabashes of curds, and a wooden spoon, and we were four. Then we trembled and sweat came on our bodies, especially I, because I knew that they would come to me, the go-between, and I thought 'cleverness is bad!' [i.e. his ready tongue had put him in the most prominent position]. I trembled, thinking: 'When they come to my place what shall I give them?' But the others ate joyfully. I only ate a little and with fear. Then we saw much food. Indeed, very much. What should we do? We called our wife [*sic*] and gave her one big calabash. Then we gathered together and looked at the food. What should we do? Then we called the councillor with whom we had spoken and said: 'Help us, we are defeated.'

'No. The chief will be angry, saying: "Why are you depriving them of their food?"'

Then I went to the chief and said: 'We beg people to help us, the food is so much we are overcome.' He laughed, all of them laughed. 'Are you overcome, Mwaisyelage?'

'Yes.'

Then he gave us four of his people, and they entered the house, and we gave them the curds and went off quickly because we feared lest they compel us to eat more and we should be ill. I put 50 cents in the basket which the chief's wives had brought us with calabashes. It was my 50 cents because the groom had finished what he had; he had only brought 4s. But it was not really mine, it belonged to my mother who had given it to me to buy groundnuts but I asked all of them, saying: 'Friends, who has fifty cents?' None of them had it, so I thought: 'How about this? Will my mother beat me? Is she not my mother? According to custom I will give it.' And the chief's wives accompanied us on the road and praised us, saying we were men of wisdom, because we had put 50 cents in their basket.

So on Thursday we went with four very good cows, some of them in milk. Because it is the work of the go-between to give the owner of the woman wise advice, saying: 'Choose good cattle to begin with, the weaker ones will follow.' And I told them: 'Let us be many friends; the first time he defeated us with his food; let us be many.' So ten of us went, and when they arrived they gave us six calabashes of curds with the whey drained off. They praised us because the cows were very good, but I told them: 'There is another which is sick at home, it will come when you have called your people to hoe, you will kill it to rejoice them.' All laughed and said: 'Let him bring it, it is Linolemu

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584 indeed, as Lisolemu always was with his cunning. And they are alike in their shortness.' [Angombwike was short of stature.]

Then they told us: 'Bring five marriage-cattle (*akakwe*), then we shall agree to hand over the girl. We will send a messenger to call you.' And we went off.

Then the husband sought four cows, because we always took less than they asked, even though there was another available, we did not take it because they would say: 'They are rich, they boast of their property,' and ask for further cattle, more than they would otherwise have done.

One day we were surprised by a messenger, saying: 'Come tomorrow for the *akakwe*.' Many of us went, people from Mwangomo's country and from Mwaipopo's, many Christians and many pagans. The pagans danced and the Christians sang songs. The groom had relatives in both countries. Before his conversion he had lived in Mwaipopo's country, but after it he moved to Kabembe, to Mwangomo's country, so he brought his fellows, the sons of Mwaipopo, and those of Mwangomo. And I, the go-between, brought my fellows from Mwaipopo's country, for it is always customary for the go-between to have a following.

When we arrived the older ones among us told me, saying: 'Cut the banana grove!' I said: 'How can I cut the banana grove?' 'Cut.' Then I cut. That is to show 'We have come, we sons-in-law of the chief (*balenga*), we marry the daughter of a chief (*unenga*).' Then my fellows said: 'We will marry another, we will come to marry a sister, a daughter of the chief again.' And I cut another.[1] Then the chief's wives sang: 'Is there only one? Is there only one?' (meaning: 'Have we borne only once? Are there not other little daughters?'). For our part, the pagans danced and danced the war-dance, and thrust their spears in the ground, and sang: 'We shall marry her little sister, she has a little sister.'

And the Christians sang hymns.

Then the go-between of the chief called me, and I went to the chief. There they told me: 'See, we are shouting you have brought few cattle, bring what we mentioned.' And the chief's wives also sang: 'We are shouting, Mwambandele, we are shouting!'

Then I crouched down and said: 'Indeed, I told you, I am a poor man; indeed, you did mention the number of cattle, and I have not brought them, and about those which I brought at first I do not boast at all, they were as good as none.'

'But you know that I have many sons who are crying out, who wish to marry wives.'

'Indeed, but I told you that we are poor, if one cries out I will hoe

[1] In other ceremonies cutting bananas is a symbol of death. It is possible that here the symbol is of a girl dying to her father's lineage, at marriage, but this is only a guess.

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for him, let him cut a garden and call me to hoe, I will come, I will make myself his servant.' 584

'But to hoe for a man and to bring him cattle are different things; you hoe for a man when he has married a wife. Who hoes for a bachelor?'

All the time the young men who came with us danced and sang: 'We have brought many cattle, all together they are eight, we have given marriage-cattle indeed.' . . . That is Nyakyusa custom.

And I replied: 'Yes, indeed, I am a child. You correct my childishness. I have no wisdom at all, you told me to bring cattle and I did not bring them. Also my comrade, the bridegroom, you correct his youth, I am like a fly which is killed by your milk, it dies because of it!'

Then he was satisfied and gave us a spear. We grasped the spear and danced with it: 'We are sons-in-law of the chief, we have married the daughter of a chief.' And we brought us. to beg for the girl (*akwasima*) but they refused, saying: 'We chiefs eat a bull.'

Then they brought us food: great quantities of food; and we were many. No one counted us. They brought twelve grain baskets of meat and bananas, sixteen calabashes of milk, and eight grain baskets or basins of banana and chicken, and much food which I have not mentioned; I have only told of the fine food. There was porridge and relish and milk, much of it. And I, the go-between, was like a chief, I divided it to my fellows, all was brought to me and I told my fellow Enoch (he who went with me to speak to the girl when we wooed her), saying: 'Take this to the So-and-so's and the So-and-so's.' Because it is not proper that I should carry the food, but another. We called our wife [*sic*] to receive the choicest food, which she ate with her sisters-in-law—the sisters of the groom had also come with us. And I chose the choicest food for the groom too. We three who had gone with him the first time to woo the girl ate with him, and we each called a friend to join us.

During the feast they showed us a cow, saying: 'Eat it.' But we refused, saying: 'We are poor men.' Then they showed us a bull which we also refused: 'We are poor men, we have plenty with what you have cooked.' Because we feared that if we ate it they would ask for another cow later on. Then we left, but there followed us fifteen grain baskets of food which they had not brought out at first.

On a later day I went with one friend, just the two of us (the groom did not come) to give fa. to take (*akwasima*) the girl. They received it. There was much food, but we ate only a little because we were only two. Before they came to bring the girl to her husband I began working for you, so I told my friend Enoch to see to everything, and I told them to go to his house.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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however, by the fact that, in the neighbourhood of Europeans, boys can earn money, and so help the family exchequer.

Puberty is reached at about fifteen, and boys pass that stage without ceremony. Girls are segregated, usually in groups. They lie on leaves spread on the floor, and must not be seen by boys, unless they are the daughters of chiefs, who are permitted to see boys at night. The initiate receives instruction, usually from her mother, though there are plenty of willing advisers besides, in household matters. When this is over, the wife of the *mfusya* (the man who was go-between at her parents' marriage) comes, with others, to inquire about the girl's character, to which a favourable answer is given by the mother: she cooks for strangers, has never known a man, and is of good temper. Then she is examined, and if she is found to be impure (as she is; there is practically no exception), she is put up into the rafters, where she is half-choked in the fumes of a smoky fire specially kindled. Here she remains until permitted to come down, a severe beating following upon any attempt to escape. (The cleansing power of smoke is to be noted also in connection with twins.) The children of Christian parents are examined in the same way. Happily the situation is improving, though very slowly. After being thoroughly smoked, the girl is washed and oiled, and the *banyago* (older women) come to instruct her in all her duties to husband and children when she has them.

Immediately after the initiation rites the betrothal

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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584 ceremonies begin; indeed, the one passes into the other. Girls are sometimes betrothed before birth, but this is usually done only when a wife has died, and the father, being obliged to supply another, offers the widower the next child to be born if it is a girl. He sends a boy to the man as a guarantee of good faith, but the boy remains only a week or so, and then returns to his home.

983 It may be accepted as certain that no boy comes through the dangers of adolescence unharmed. Fathers are said to warn their growing sons about these dangers, and sometimes they threaten to refuse to find wives for them if the warning goes unheeded; but nothing more is done, and the threat is never carried out.

524 526 Children's games are much too numerous for anything but a mere reference. For quiet moments, puzzles; or guessing what is in the hand of another; or what object, out of sight, is being touched. A favourite river- or lake-side sport is diving and staying under water while some one counts. Walking on the hands or on stilts is very popular.

526 *Tangilo* is a ball game, with sides, the ball being thrown from one to another on the same side, while the other side endeavours to get and keep it a given number of throws, without letting it fall to the ground or into the hands of the opponents. *Inguba* is a game not unlike our hockey, a ball being struck about, and kept as far as possible within one's own side. *Ngulya* is played with sides sitting at a distance from a small object set up in the middle, while any round thing is thrown at it from side to side, the winning side

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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Even apart from the question of payment, a native marriage is a complicated business, involving prolonged negotiations; inquiries into the character and health of the parties, the prospects of the young man, the proposed place of residence, the quality of the gardens, and many other considerations, which are seriously gone into. 584

The first formal approach to the girl is made by a friend of the boy; but as this is bad form, it is afterwards denied. Next, a neighbour of the girl's father is visited.

"My friend here," says the *mfasya* (go-between), "needs some one to carry water for him."

"There is no one here to carry water for him," says the neighbour.

"O yes, there is," comes the reply; "the daughter of so-and-so would do very well."

The father of the girl is now visited by the whole party, and gives a non-committal consent, receiving a hoe as a token that negotiations have begun. Next day a council of the whole family discusses the proposal, and decides the number of cattle to be paid if everything else is satisfactory, with the pleasant prospect of a feast in the evening. The bridegroom and his friends then bring the first of the cattle, usually only one at this stage. The young men are oiled, painted, or adorned with leaves and flowers, and approach the bride's home at a run, leaping and shouting, and waving spears or clubs. The go-between lays on the ground a spear and a hoe, and invites the girl to come and take them. If she does so she signifies her

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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584 consent to the marriage, but it should be noted that she has the right of refusal, though it is seldom exercised. Two brides recently refused in church (they were both Christians) to marry the men who stood beside them; and a young girl a few months ago was with difficulty rescued from a hateful marriage, and is now pluckily living her own life, rather than submit to the unsavoury fate which her guardians had ordained for her. In case of refusal, however, the father may wash his hands of the whole matter, and decline to take any steps to find another husband for his disobedient daughter.

To return, the girl takes the hoe, and with the haft smites the cow which is standing there, in token that she accepts the obligations which the payment of the cattle involves. Then she lifts the spear, and hands it to her father, saying, "Slay me with this spear if I am unfaithful to my husband"; and the father, with a grim assurance that he will not fail, lays up the spear in the house, where it will be seen by the ancestral spirits.

584 585 About a week after the feast which follows, the bride, with one girl friend, and a "mother," but not the mother who bore her, goes to the house of the go-between, who gives the mother a fowl, and the bride a piece of bark-cloth, and leads them to the husband's house. With a gift from the husband, the mother now retires, and a succession of small gifts induces the bride to take up her duties: a fowl persuades her to enter the house; some other gift, probably a few cents, induces her to kindle a fire, a

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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third to cook food, and a final gift is required to make her lie down on the mat along with her girl friend, who stays with her for a few days. This ceremony of the gifts is never omitted in heathen marriages, and each successively binds the girl to her husband.

If the bride is a twin, the doctor must be present, to sprinkle medicines over house and bedding, and to give the couple a decoction supposed to prevent the occurrence of twins in the new family.

Except the daughters of Christian parents, all Konde girls are married before they arrive at puberty, and what has been described above applies to child wives, who stay with their husbands for about a month, and then go home.

The child wife having grown to womanhood, however, further ceremonies have to be observed. The husband arrives at her father's house with an ox for the feast, and a mock struggle for possession of the bride takes place. The women of her family barricade themselves in the house, which is attacked by the women of the other family. Payment of a shilling opens the door, and the further struggle which takes place in the house is brought to an end by the formal presentation of the ox. The husband and his friends enter, and engage in a weird dance, a mere tramping of the floor in unison, with shouting and waving of spears, no doubt a survival of what was once marriage by capture.

The washing and shaving of the bride follows, and her bark-cloth is burned, and a new one given her, and then comes the feast of beef and beer, the materials

601 *Mwiukulu* = grandparent or grandchild; but a man addresses his male grandparents as *Mwinangu* (my compeer) and his female grandparents as *Nkasi* (wife). A woman addresses her male grandparents as *Ndume* (husband) and her female grandparents as *Mwinangu* (my compeer).

Ndume = husband, extended for a woman to include the husbands of 'sisters', male grandparents, male grandchildren, husbands of female grandparents or grandchildren; all 'brothers' of a husband, husband of a father's sister, and grandfathers of a husband, and finally, the husband's sister's son.

Nkasi = wife; for a man it includes the wives of 'brothers', female grandparents and grandchildren, or wives of male ones; all sisters of wife, daughters of wife's brothers, wives of grandsons by marriage, the 'grandmothers' of a wife, and the wife of a maternal uncle.[1]

606 The Ngonde do not seem to distinguish cross-cousins from ortho-cousins as clearly as do the Maravi, or the Yao, Makua, and Makonde peoples.

MARRIAGE

582 There are no exogamous clans, but the descendants of a common grandfather (either paternal or maternal) are forbidden to marry.[2] The descendants of a common great-grandfather are supposed not to marry, but sometimes they do so before the relationship is discovered; they then simply drink a special medicine, but do not break the marriage. The old men speak of a now abandoned custom of preferential cross-cousin marriage.[3] The husband of the eldest girl of a family has the prior right to marry her full sisters, and such marriages are very common. A man also has the right to marry the daughter of his wife's brother, therefore the wife of the wife's brother is classed as a parent-in-law in kinship terminology.[4]

583 The passage of cattle makes children of a marriage legitimate. A child of a man who has given no cattle belongs either to the mother's husband or to her father. Cattle are in rapid circulation. Few men possess more than six cows at any time, yet marriage payments range from four to thirty cows (formerly only one or two were given). Marriage involves considerable expenditure and months of preliminary economic activity.[5] The cattle are seldom handed over all at once, but in ones or twos over a period of years. Full brothers have a claim to the cattle of their sister's marriage, and at the marriage of his eldest daughter the father hands one of the cows to the village headman.[6]

● 584 A girl commonly goes to visit and sleep with her betrothed husband for several years before she finally sets up house for him. The ideal procedure is by negotiation with the girl's father, but a man without cows may run off with a girl and satisfy her father with cows later on, or a man with cattle may seduce a married woman and pay her husband the adultery fine of two cows, plus the cows originally given for her marriage. A girl may be betrothed before puberty, and may visit her husband, but she is supposed to be virgin at her initiation ceremony, and is generally not allowed to

[1] Sanderson, 3, 1923. [2] Mackenzie, 1925, p. 55.

[3] See Wilson, 2, 1936, p. 267; but according to Sanderson, 3, 1923, p. 453, cross-cousins are classed as sisters, and all first cousins are unmarriageable; according to Johnston, 1897, p. 415, and to Mackenzie 1925, p. 55, cousin marriage was not allowed.

[4] Wilson, 2, 1936, p. 262; Sanderson, op. cit., p. 451.

[5] Wilson and Hunter, 1939, p. 11. [6] Mackenzie, 1925, p. 65.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

584 live with her husband until at least three cows have been given. One of the bulls is only given if the girl is virgin at her initiation rite, and this bull is given to her mother. The laws of inheritance and the system of marriage by cattle payments ensures that cattle will be in the hands of the older men. In general polygynists are men over forty-five.[1]

595 The first wife married is the chief wife, and is entitled to respect and obedience from her co-wives. Her first son is her husband's ultimate heir. A man cannot lightly divorce his first wife during the lifetime of his own father who provided the cattle
586 with which she was married. Divorce is effected by the return of the marriage cattle. Usually the woman has a lover who will pay cows to redeem her; if she refuses to go back to her husband there is no means of compelling her to do so, though in pre-European times her father and the chief might send her back. In such a case the husband would be entitled to his original payments plus their increase.[2] Men do not demand divorce for adultery unless it is persistent.[3] Divorce is often sought for very trivial reasons.[4] If the paternal uncles have helped the groom to collect his marriage cattle, the beasts are redistributed to their original donors after they have been returned to the husband.[5]

587 A man whose wife dies can claim a substitute or the refund of his cattle. When a man dies his widows pass to his heir who takes them all as wives, if he is a brother of
768 the dead man; if the heir is a son he takes all except his own mother and the wives who are her close kin. Inherited wives have the same land rights as others.[6]

INHERITANCE

428 Brothers inherit before sons, then half-brothers (linked half-brothers before other half-brothers). When all the brothers are dead the property and wives of each pass to each one's eldest son.[7] This rule also applies to the Nyamwanga and Iwa.[8] The heir assumes the full obligations of father to his younger brothers and is responsible for their marriages; they hoe for him and are fed by his wives as are unmarried sons.[9] The sister's son only inherits if all near patrilineal kinsmen are dead or are infants.[10]

The above applies to commoners' inheritance only. For chiefs, succession and inheritance may follow different principles. For instance, in succession to local chiefdoms, two or more sons would divide the chiefdom. Among the Ngonde the Kyungu and the great chiefs were not chosen according to strict genealogical right, but were selected from the appropriate families according to their wealth, generosity, and courage. In the succession to the great chiefdoms, there was formerly a difference of procedure in the two royal lines: that of Ngelenge, where the nobles of Ngonde were sent by the Kyungu to help to select the successor; that of Ngana, the line of the female side, where the nobles of Ngonde merely summoned the great commoners to discuss with them who was to succeed. Nowadays the difference between the two lines has disappeared, and the Ngelenge custom is followed for both. If the genealogical heir

[1] Wilson, 2, 1936, pp. 257–9.
[2] Wilson, 2, 1936, p. 263.
[3] Ibid., p. 65.
[4] Mackenzie, 1925, p. 55.
[5] Mackenzie, 1925, p. 92.
[6] Wilson, 3, 1938, p. 27.
[7] Ibid., 2, 1936, pp. 264–6; Sanderson, 3, 1923, p. 453.
[8] Coxhead, 1914, p. 45.
[9] Wilson, 3, 1938, pp. 11 and 28; Johnston, 1897, p. 471.
[10] Wilson, 5, 1939, p. 55.

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present possesses. A young man is given cows by his father and sends them to his father-in-law; his father's income in cattle is derived partly from the increase of his own stock, but chiefly from the marriages of his own and his brothers' sisters and daughters, for it is the custom for full-brothers and half-brothers to given one another cows as their daughters and sisters get married; the young man's father-in-law gives the cows which he receives some to his brothers, some to his sons, and some he keeps himself. And thus, continually, the cattle are driven down the paths of human relationship.

The passage of cattle makes the children of a marriage legitimate and members of their father's family; the sons can inherit from their father, and the daughters, when they marry in their turn, bring cattle to him. But if a woman bears a child to a man who has given no cows for her, the child is illegitimate, has no right of inheritance anywhere, and belongs either to her husband or father, not to its own biological sire.

Getting married is not a single event; the marriage-cattle are seldom handed over all at once, but in ones, twos, or threes over a period of years; and a girl very commonly goes to visit and sleep with her betrothed husband, from time to time, for several years before she finally sets up house with him and begins to bear his children. There are three ways of getting married: (1) by negotiation with the girl's father (2) by running off with an unmarried girl (3) by running off with a married woman. The first is the ideal, socially approved, method and is not uncommonly followed. The negotiations often begin while the girl is still an infant, sometimes even before she is born; the man sends one or two cows to her father to bespeak her (*okosingela*). These cows are counted as part of the marriage-cattle (*engwelu*) and the girl is henceforth called his "wife," but she lives at home with her parents. Sometimes a boy is betrothed by his father while he himself is still young, but always, I think, to a girl several years his junior. Such betrothals are determined by the friendship of the two families. A girl who is bespoken in infancy does not, ideally, go to live altogether with her husband till after she has reached puberty and passed through the elaborate initiation which then takes place. But there is an intermediate period when, from the age of ten or earlier, she is allowed to visit and sleep with her husband from time to time. The man sends a bull or a hen to her father to ask for his wife (*okosombolela*), and the old man agrees to let her go on occasional visits. But she is seldom allowed to go until at least three cows, in all, have been received for her. She is not supposed to be deflowered before puberty and she and her husband always, at first, practise limited intercourse without penetration. Not infrequently, however, full intercourse

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583 takes place on some occasion and her parents usually find out when it
584 does. In some families the girl's mother examines her after each visit to
836 her husband to see if the hymen is intact, sometimes the girl tells her mother herself. When her father hears about it his action is determined partly by his feelings towards his son-in-law, partly by his need for cattle. Sometimes he does nothing at all; occasionally he sends back the cows he has received for his daughter and breaks off the marriage, and this is particularly likely to happen if the girl has been forced against her will or generally ill-treated. More usually, however, he sends his daughter to live with her husband saying: "You have made her a woman yourself, you must pay the rest of the marriage-cattle quickly."

836 We have no evidence to suggest that the girls in any general way dislike sleeping with their husbands before puberty, rather the reverse; and the men say: "It is good, it accustoms a girl to her husband." But some girls dislike the particular men to whom they are betrothed.

881 The initiation of a girl at puberty lasts for some months and includes several exchanges of food between her family and that of her husband, and a number of ceremonies in which both her girl friends of the same village[4] and her husband's friends from his village[4] participate. If a girl
[584] is not bespoken before puberty the initiation is still carried out in a modified form, but its full significance is lost.

585 Soon after her initiation a girl, if she has been bespoken, goes to live altogether with her husband, to play her part in his economy and to bear him children. If only a few cows have been received for her, her father insists on one or two more being handed over before she is allowed to go. At some time, perhaps during the girl's initiation, perhaps years later, the final marriage ceremony (*okokwa*) takes place. The balance of the marriage-cattle are brought to her father by the husband and his village neighbours,[4] her "mothers" prepare a great deal of food for the guests to eat, there is dancing, feasting and great excitement.

554 The number of cows handed over varies with the wealth and social
583 status of the two families concerned. Six to ten cows is the most usual number, but sometimes as few as four or as many as thirty change hands.

583 The second method of marriage is adopted when a man falls in love with a grown girl, who is not bespoken, and cannot find the cows to satisfy her father at once; he runs off with her and regularizes the position
583 later by sending cattle. The third method is adopted when a man falls
837 in love with a married woman and has cows available; he runs off with

[4] Vide infra "The Age Village" A
A [P. 269, cat. 116 — Analyst]

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583
837 her and then returns to her first husband the cows he had given for her with two in addition as adultery fine. But this return is usually made only after the first husband has brought a lawsuit against him.

837 Adultery is extremely common now-a-days; when a man runs off
684 with, or is discovered seducing, a married woman and has not enough
177 cows to marry her, he is legally compelled to pay two cows for the adultery to her husband. In pre-European days an adulterer, if caught, was usually punished by the husband and his neighbours with death or extreme torture, and the old men tell me that adultery was then a rarer event.

584 The extent to which a girl is usually allowed to choose whom she
177 will marry is difficult to guage, and varies in different circumstances. Opportunities of meeting and flirting with young men at dances and ceremonies are frequent; and the older men say that, owing to the abolition by the Europeans of the old severe punishments for adultery, girls
582 are freer now than they used to be, for their lovers no longer fear to run off with them if they are married or bespoken (which is in Nyakyusa law very much the same thing). The custom of betrothing infant girls is, they declare, less common than it used to be; they are now more chary of pledging their daughters "for when they grow up they just run off with someone else." A girl's choice is, however, limited by the necessity of finding a lover who has cows, and few young men have enough to secure her if she is already married, though they may have enough to pay an adultery fine.

428 Owing, in part, to the laws of inheritance, by which a commoner's[5]
593 full-brother inherits before his son, it is the older men who control the cattle. Every bachelor is largely or wholly dependent on his own father (or his dead father's heir) for the cows for his first marriage, and he must hoe his father's fields for many years before he is given enough to secure a wife and to set up a family of his own. Economic reciprocity is an element in most human relationships, and it enters into the Nyakyusa relationship of father and son. It is well understood, in this society, that
593 after a certain length of time spent hoeing his father's fields a young man
685 is entitled to some cows, if his father has any; and if his father delays too long the young man either stops hoeing for his father or else he takes legal action and enforces his claim. Between father and son such law cases are rare, but they are frequent between a young man and the brother of his father who has inherited his father's wives, property, and position in the family.

[5] The laws of inheritance for a chief are, in certain respects, different; vide infra, "The Chiefdom."
3 4 [Cat. 116 pp. 278ff. --Analyst]

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622 643 796 585 He, like many of his men, may have been married long before the 'coming out', but his ritual wedding to the mothers of his heirs follows it, and from the time of his seclusion, until his marriage, he, and all his men, should live as bachelors. The brides are chosen by his village headmen and in theory they are carried off by force, whether betrothed or not, but nowadays, since the [177] Administration discountenances forced marriages, the headmen arrange matters with the girls' families beforehand, very privately, but still they come with a show of force to carry off the brides. Girls are chosen who are approaching puberty and they are taken to the house of a commoner contemporary of their future husband. There they live until both have grown up and the puberty ritual can be celebrated. It follows the usual course except that the [584] neighbours of the man in whose house the brides are secluded play the part of the girls' families, cooking for the groom's party at the prescribed feasts. The chief washes with both girls, thereby acknowledging them as his senior wives; the marriage bed is prepared with medicines and there is great rejoicing. The following morning someone knocks at the door of the nuptial chamber crying: 'War has come', and the chief and his brides rush out to the pasture land, just as the parents of twins do at the end of their ritual.[1] Then[2] a long narrow stone (*ulufiga*) is set with medicines [799] in the earth, beside the chief's trees as a symbol of his marriage (*ikimanyilo kya bwegi*) to the mothers of his heirs. 'The stone is the chief' (*ilifiga ili jo malafyale*). Hearth-bricks (*amafiga*) are then set up for each bride with medicines buried beneath them, and they are given fire from that ritually kindled by their husband and his headman. Finally they are given medicines to drink in order to develop in them 'the dignity of chief's wives' (*ubusiya bwe fumbe*).

643 583 No marriage is complete, in Nyakyusa eyes, until cattle have been handed over, and though the chief's brides have been carried off by force, cattle—more than double the normal number—are given to their fathers. The village headmen of the retiring generation should provide these cattle and they or their heirs are recompensed when the eldest daughters born of the two wives are

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 158, 169.

[2] Mwanyilo's marriage apparently preceded the planting of his trees and the phallic stone was erected at the same time as the trees were planted, but the marriages of the sons of Mwangoka *followed* the planting of their trees. The order of events seems to vary, and differences are explained as due to the order of the doctor in charge of the ritual. 'Different doctors have different customs.'

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like most of the leaders of Zionist Churches in the south.[1] 797X

It is noticeable that the two 'independent' Churches have a more elaborate form of service than the Church from which their leaders have sprung, and Ngemela habitually wears conspicuous vestments. There is, of course, great variation between different denominations in the emphasis placed on ritual, some Protestants abjuring it and turning their very insistence on starkness and simplicity into a ritual in itself—a taboo. There seems to be a clear tendency in Southern Africa for 'independent' Churches to express themselves more and more in ritual and less in dogma. In this way they reduce the gap between themselves and the pagans, for the pagan religion is expressed almostly exclusively in ritual, whereas Christianity is expressed in creeds and confessions as well as in the rituals of the Church.

795X 779 [796]

(e) THE CONTRAST BETWEEN PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN

There are certain common elements in the rituals celebrated by pagans and Christians: some of the occasions are the same, and in the conceptions of sacrifice, of death and rebirth, of confession and cleansing, there are similarities; but there are also profound differences. The conception of life, immortality, replaces the preoccupation with fertility, for though most Nyakyusa Christians, like the pagans, regard celibacy as evidence of physical abnormality, and the conventional desire of a woman is to have six children—a quiverful in Nyakyusa eyes—yet fertility is no longer the end of all being, sought in every ritual. There are profound differences, too, in the values expressed in the rituals regarding sex relations, the range of moral obligations, and social change. In pagan thought polygyny is good—a man should have many children. Child marriage is defended on the ground that a girl 'gets accustomed to her husband' if she goes to him early, and homosexual relations between youths and young men are tolerated since they have no wives and *cannot* marry if the older men are polygynists. What is upheld is the chastity of women, and a total separation of the sex activities of members of successive generations, expressed in the taboos limiting familiarity between mother and son, father and nubile daughter, father-in-law and daughter-law. In Christian thought it is the 'pure in heart' who 'see God' and this is interpreted by the mission Churches to imply monogamy. Only in the 'independent' African Churches is it asserted

797X 795X [842] [589] [595] [584] [838] [836] [561] [183] [595]

[1] The emphasis on healing, so common in the south, is absent.

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that polygyny is compatible with Christianity, and indeed sanctioned by the example of many of the heroes of the Old Testament. It is here that the cleavage between pagan and Christian ways of life is felt to be greatest: the desire to marry or inherit a second wife is the main reason for many men leaving the mission Churches. The traditional way for the well-to-do man to expend his capital and maintain his position was to marry again and the wealth of the lineage was concentrated in the senior line through the rule of inheritance of widows.

Again and again in sermons Nyakyusa preachers came back to the problem of polygyny. 'Let not those who know not the law deceive you saying, "You, Christian, what is one poor little wife? (*ikikilala kimo kyene*) See, do not your children also die (like those of pagans) and constantly fall ill? Take a second wife." Perhaps the BaNgemela tell you that God also favours that. If you agree you are uprooted. What, after all, is a second wife? In Jesus there is life.' (2 Peter iii. 17.)

Young men are also caught in a contradiction of values when their fathers have betrothed them while still quite young.

It is very difficult for a man to refuse a girl whom his father has engaged for him. To a pagan man it does not matter very much because, provided he has cattle, he can always marry a girl of his own choice as well, but a Christian cannot. Such was the case of a friend of ours, A, a Christian teacher. When he was a child, before he was baptized, his father, a senior village headman and a powerful and wealthy man, engaged for him B, a little girl who could barely walk. A got on well at school and when he was growing up the missionary said to him: 'When you marry choose a girl of some education, because it is good for an educated man to marry an educated girl.' A fell in love with C, a Christian, who had learnt to read and write, and sew and launder, and who consequently was one of the best-educated girls in the district. They came to an understanding together, our informant being the 'go-between'. A went to the elders of the congregation and told them he wished to marry C. They replied: 'We, on our part agree; go and ask your father.' Then A's father said: 'Well, no, B is your wife (though she was still a child and the marriage had not been consummated), but you are my eldest son, I have many cattle, I agree to arrange marriages with them both for you at once.' So A thought and thought and went back to the elders and told them saying: 'My father refuses, he won't hear of it unless I marry

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them both, but I don't want to leave the Church.' Then the elders supported his father saying, 'We don't like sons to be disobedient and the girl will make a good wife for you.' 'But,' argued A, 'my wife is a child and C is grown up.' The missionary supported him saying: 'We are going to send him to a distance (to train as a teacher), it is better that he go married.' But the elders supported his father, following the Nyakyusa custom. Then a message came to A saying that B had 'grown-up'. He said to us, his friends: 'What can I say now? I can no longer argue that my wife is a child.' And to the missionaries and elders he said: 'Send me away for my training. I must think, I am not at peace.'

While A was still away D (who was a close friend of A's) came back from school, and he too fell in love with C. But before he spoke to her he wrote to A asking him: 'Have you broken with her, or are you still agreed to marry? Can I make love to her or not?' Then A wrote back: 'Yes, I have broken with her, it is true that I love her, but I cannot square marrying her with Christianity. Go ahead.' So then D came to our informant to ask him to be the go-between again, and to take him to the girl. So they went and showed her A's letter, and asked her if she could love D. Then she was very sorrowful and would give no answer until she had written to A herself. 'Is it true that you have left me?' And A replied: 'Indeed, my dear, I have left you. I love you truly, but what can we do? Perhaps the powers do not wish that we should marry. My father refuses. He says he will arrange a marriage with you, for me, as my second wife, but what of our Christianity? Are we both to leave the Church?' So then she agreed to marry D.

All this time the elders had supported A's father in his refusal saying: 'B also is a proper woman. We are surprised at the young man.' And A's father said to him: 'I betrothed this girl for you when she was quite tiny. *Kyala* has already given you this woman.' But the marriage of A and B proved a failure—they were constantly quarrelling—and later they were divorced.

The 'go-between' of this story was more fortunate in his own marriage. Like A he was the son of a wealthy pagan and two wives had been betrothed for him before he became a Christian. When he decided to be baptized he flatly refused to marry either of them. His father was very angry. 'For a time he treated me as if I were not his son, saying: "Since you refuse these girls I will not give you any cows to marry at all." So I said: "All right," and

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went away to work again and in time I earned four cows which I hid with friends far from home. My father knew nothing about them. Then I wrote to my father from Mwaseba [about twenty miles from where his father lived] where I was working, saying that I had found a girl there, the daughter of a Christian, and please could I have the cows with which to marry her? My father said: "No, she lives too far away." ' Then later he found a Christian girl of whom his father approved and a satisfactory marriage was arranged.

A common topic of discussion among Christian women was whether parents should choose mates for their children, or leave them free to choose for themselves, for though traditionally a girl had to signify her consent to marriage, she was betrothed very young and her freedom of choice was small. The growing insistence on personal freedom in marriage is symptomatic of a radical change in the attitude towards persons.

The pagan rituals were the main occasions of recreation. It has been shown, in *Rituals of Kinship*, how pagan funerals and marriages are the occasion for feasting and dancing and display, and how the seclusion hut of a nubile girl is the gathering place for the young men and girls of the neighbourhood. Even a twin ritual is a festival with beer for the older men and some meat for everyone. The sacrifices at the groves were feasts for the leading men of the country, and the 'coming out' was the occasion of the greatest feast of the generation, and dances were practised for months ahead. Partly because of a change in sex morality, and partly because the meat and beer at pagan feasts are offered to the shades, Christians are largely excluded from these festivals. They may not participate in pagan dances, or join in the lewd songs, or attend the initiation hut of a girl, and they are partly debarred from the feasts of the pagans: certain of the Churches (notably the Church of Scotland and, for a time, the Moravians) forbid Christians to drink beer at all.

And the Christian rituals, though some of them are 'festivals of the Church', are scarcely celebrated as such. There has been a separation between ritual and recreation which has left a gap in the Christian community. It is true that the Christian young men and girls sing and dance at funerals and marriages, but the elders, for the most part, look on with dubious eyes, saying that dancing leads to adultery, and several of the dances introduced by

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some copy, the manners of Europeans towards their wives, but neither husband nor wife is quite sure what the change in manners implies, and both are often inconsistent in their behaviour. As an educated Nyakyusa put it: 'They do not know what to expect from each other.'

Marriage relationships are complicated by the disproportion in the numbers of men and women; a disproportion which continues while the rule of monogamy is preached and accepted by many. The first effect of the increase in wealth in Rungwe district was for the marriage age of women to go down; in Mr. Punch's phrase 'too many cattle were chasing too few wives'; but the combined pressure of missions and Administration, and some acquaintance with the customs of the outside world, has reversed that tendency, and the marriage of girls below puberty, which was general among pagans in 1938, now appears to be exceptional. Many girls are still betrothed before puberty, but they do not go to their husbands until after that time, and to be still single at puberty with no betrothed to play his part in the ritual is no longer embarrassing to a girl, for the puberty ritual is not celebrated in full. The ruling of the District Council that a man may not recover more than *one* cow given for a girl who has not reached puberty, if the marriage is dissolved, discourages men from giving cattle for girls who have not grown up. At the same time the marriage age of men is going down. Marriage in the early twenties or even the late teens is common now, for young men who have been to work on the mines can buy marriage cattle for themselves, and Christians who are well-to-do provide for the marriages of young sons instead of taking additional wives. Therefore the gap in the marriage age of men and women is very considerably diminished, but it still exists, and combined with the disproportion in the total number of males and females it means that a considerable proportion of the women (perhaps 30 per cent)[1] must become the junior wives of polygynists or remain unmarried altogether, or live alone as widows.

Among pagans polygyny is approved, but young men are irked by their responsibility for elderly widows, a responsibility that was formerly accepted as a matter of course. Able-bodied wives are still economically an asset even now that trade goods are in general use. For Nyakyusa men—pagans—have insisted that as

[1] The exact ratio is calculated at 87·9 : 100 (*table supra*) and the average difference in the marriage age may well be six years.

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182 595 797 Churches in the area. Nevertheless the bulk of professing Christians are monogamists, though it is still customary and, in Rungwe District, economically profitable, for a rich man who is not a Christian to have more than one wife. The difficulties of establishing monogamy are accentuated by the great disproportion in the numbers of men and women. If the figures available are accurate, a general acceptance of monogamy would mean that only about 70 per cent of the women could be married; therefore the Church is necessarily concerned in seeking an adjustment in the disproportion of the population—in keeping the men alive if our assumption that the shortage of men is due to a heavy male death rate is true.

182 797 584 The yeast of the gospel permeates still further. It is taken to imply the freedom of an individual to accept or reject a partner in marriage. This has been maintained from the first in the Nyakyusa Church, and is enforced by the courts, which apply a conception of personal rights springing from the Christian tradition.

182 586 797 Most Nyakyusa men attribute the rapid rise in the divorce rate to this new 'freedom' of women. Christian teaching stresses the family and the sanctity of marriage, but it ignores the lineage. In the traditional rituals of kinship the lineage is represented again and again, while in Christian ritual it is the elementary family and the Church that are pictured. The preoccupation with fertility and the reproductive cycle was linked with the glorification of the lineage itself, and it disappears when the lineage ceases to be the basis of social grouping.

182 181 178 How closely linked are symbols to other aspects of a society? Our hypothesis is that they are relatively free, but it can be shown that many of the symbols used in the traditional rituals of the Nyakyusa reflect the economy, and vary somewhat from one area to another, with the staple crops. The development of trade or of new crops is a prerequisite for using the symbols of bread and wine traditional in the Christian rituals, and even the 'independent' African Churches use new foods, not the beer and bananas of the country; thus change in material symbols and change in economy may be directly connected. The imagery changes also with the changing social structure; Kyala ceases to be pictured as a senior kinsman, when the lineage organization begins to weaken; he is God the father of a family rather than an early member of the royal lineage. But there is no evidence that